



Todd Schmitz
Deputy Clerk

Carmella Sabaugh

Macomb County
Clerk/Register of Deeds

Betty A. Oleksik
Deputy Register of Deeds

June 19, 2007

The Honorable Steve Bieda
State Representative
P. O. Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

Dear Representative Bieda:

I write to express my full support of House Bills 4048 and 4553 which would make it easier for our citizens to vote. Please submit my remarks to the Committee on Ethics and Elections which is considering these bills today. We have proven in Macomb County that if it becomes easier to vote, more people will vote.

The citizens of Michigan deserve the same opportunity as those in 28 other states that allow no reason absentee voting. The citizens of Macomb County deserve the same opportunity given to citizens in Oakland County to get an absentee voter ballot.

It should be as easy to vote as it is to pay taxes. We allow residents to pay taxes by mail without giving a reason. Surely, the same convenience could be extended to our residents when voting. In our fast-paced lives with more and more time spent at work, commuting, and taking care of children and elderly parents its becoming harder to attend the polls during the 13 hours they are open on Election Day.

Please do not take away local control over elections by voting against these bills. The authority of all county and local clerks to decide whether to mail all residents 60 years of age and older an absentee voter application form before each election must be preserved. In Macomb County, I mailed application forms to voters age 60 and older prior to the November 2006 general election, with bipartisan support from the Macomb County Board of Commissioners. I also did

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this in the 2005 and 2006 school elections, and while I served as Warren City Clerk. Ironically, this has been the practice countywide in Oakland County for years. My action created uniformity for those voters who would not have received an AV application from their local clerk and preserves local control. Ironically, in November the Michigan GOP mailed over a million unsolicited AV application forms to "targeted" voters, yet they are suing me for a similar mailing I sent equally to all voters!

Making it easier to vote improves voter turnout. On May 8, 2007, I conducted the Utica Community Schools Board of Education election in Shelby Township. In prior elections the Shelby Township clerk did not mail AV applications to all voters age 60 and older. I did. The result is a 36% increase in absent voter turnout from 2005 and 32% more than in 2006.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Carmella Sabaugh
Macomb County Clerk and Register of Deeds

Cc: State Representative Marc Corriveau